



Date: October 3, 2005
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Plans are underway to re-open the Shepherd Ah Nei Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Area in the next few weeks according to Sandy Brooks, BLM Billings Field Office Manager. "Last week the Interior Board of Land Appeals (IBLA) dissolved the stay it had ordered in July, which allows us to begin implementing our travel management plan for the area."

The BLM has planned a work day at the site on Saturday, Oct. 8, to prepare it for re-opening. The BLM is asking for volunteers to help install signage and barriers on trails that have been permanently closed and reclaimed, build and repair fences, and do other miscellaneous maintenance jobs. Volunteers are asked to arrive by 9 a.m. and should be through about 3 p.m.

More information on the work day and on the status of the re-opening can be found on the BLM's 24-hour information hotline. The BLM established the permanent hotline so users can obtain current information on riding conditions, closures, or limitations in effect. That number is 896-5014.

The plan for the 1,063-acre area is outlined in the BLM's environmental assessment and decision record issued in May 2005. Under the decision, approximately six miles of the 50 miles of roads and trails will be permanently closed. During periods of wet or muddy conditions or when fire restrictions warrant, the entire OHV area will be closed. Specific areas or trails posing a threat to public safety or those undergoing stabilization and rehabilitation work or weed treatment applications will be closed until the condition is resolved.

The appeal of the travel management plan is still pending before the IBLA.

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